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Tass condemns U.S. demand for cuts in Soviets' U.N. staff

From Wire Reports

MOSCOW — Tass said yesterday that the U.S. order to reduce the Soviet staff at United Nations headquarters in New York was a hostile move and accused the United States of spying on U.N. diplomats.

Washington ordered the Soviet U.N. diplomatic staff cut from 275 to 170 by April 1, 1988, saying staff levels were unreasonably high and that Soviet personnel were engaged in espionage and other non-diplomatic acts. The cuts are to begin Oct. 1.

Tass, the official news agency, did not say yesterday what the Soviet response might be, but it said the order violated the agreement under which the United States acts as the U.N.'s host and said U.N. lawyers were studying the issue.

It said numerous countries raised "quite justified doubts" about keeping the U.N. headquarters in New York.

In a dispatch from New York, Tass accused the United States of spying at the United Nations.

The United States intensively ex-

ploits the fact that the United Nations headquarters is located in New York for espionage purposes — even the American press has to admit that," it said.

It quoted a column published in *Newsday*, a newspaper on Long Island, N.Y., as saying the United Nations is a "target of opportunity" for U.S. intelligence agencies.

The column was written Aug. 9, 1982, by James Bamford, author of a book that focused on the National Security Agency. In the book, Mr. Bamford said the NSA had access to virtually all messages passing in and out of diplomats' New York offices.

The National Security Agency is America's most secret intelligence agency, reporting to the White House.

Tass did not note that the column was printed in the newspaper's opinion section.

Tass quoted a U.N. spokesman as saying Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar had ordered an inquiry to see whether the U.S. demand conformed with the accord between the United Nations and its host country.